

CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

MONDAY, JUNE 25, 2012

HOPE HIGHLANDS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

300 HOPE ROAD

EXECUTIVE SESSION 6:00 P.M.

IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED BY PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

A meeting of the Cranston School Committee was held on the evening of the above date at Hope Highlands Elementary School with the following members present: Chairperson Iannazzi, Mr. Lombardi, Mr. Traficante, Mr. Bloom, Mrs. Ruggieri, Mrs. Culhane and Mrs. McFarland. The Administrative Team and Attorney Cascione were also present.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. It was moved by Mr. Lombardi and seconded by Mr. Bloom and unanimously carried that the members convene to Executive Session pursuant to RI State Laws PL 42-46-5(a)(1) Personnel (Non-renewal of Administrator's Contract – Elementary Principal), (Review candidate applications for the position of Superintendent), (Administrator Contracts); PL 42-46-5(a)(2) Collective Bargaining and Litigation (Contract Negotiations' Update – Secretaries), (Maintenance of Effort), (Cranston Area Career & Technical Center Transfer Agreement), (Consideration of legal options regarding status of aid to education

appropriation and legal advice relating to same).

Call to Order – Public Session was called to order at 7:20 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was conducted and the roll was called. A quorum was present. No votes were taken in Executive Session.

Executive Session Minutes Sealed – June 25, 2012

A motion was made to seal the minutes of Executive Session by Mr. Lombardi, seconded by Mr. Traficante and unanimously voted to seal these minutes.

Public Acknowledgements / Communications – There were none.

Chairperson's Communications – There were none.

Superintendent's Communications – There were none.

School Committee Member Communications

Mr. Lombardi

It 's not often that we have many people in the audience at this time of year so I am going to take the opportunity to set forth Tuesday, July 3, 2012 at the Cranston Police Station is a blood drive in honor of Miranda Petrella who is one of our Cranston West graduates battling with Leukemia. I would urge you to tell two friends and have them tell two friends and so on. It's a wonderful cause; it doesn't hurt and let's all get behind one of our kids. It is a blood and marrow drive.

Thank you.

Public Hearing- Members of the public who know the person in resolution 12-6-36; there appears to be a resolution this evening so it is the intent of the School Committee to table that matter tonight.

Students (agenda/non-agenda matters) – There were none.

Members of the Public (agenda matters only)

Jay DeCristofaro, 236 Deerfield Road, Principal in the District

As an administrator and educator in general, sometimes we ask ourselves why we do what we do and especially when we are faced with the difficulties and the challenges that come our way every day, it always comes back to the same thing. It's the kids! I looked at this resolution tonight when it came to us through the e-mail and it reminded me of some of the time that I spent at Park View. I remember seeing some of the children that came through those doors while I was there during my three years and I remembered thinking there were certain ones that I knew that actually are going to end up being, not only quality citizens, but also fine leaders. I'm very, very proud to say congratulations to these kids right here because they are the best. Good job kids!!!

Ava Rabiner, Attends Daniel D. Waterman Elementary School – Res. #12-6-36

Mrs. Valk is a very admirable and professional principal. She's been

there for me and many other students along the way. Not only is she kind, she's also very talented at her job. Many of my fellow students love her like I do. I'd like you to take into consideration all that she has done for this school. She has made this school a better place and probably a lot of the students better people. Without her in the school, it wouldn't be as fun or pleasant environment that it usually is. That is what I have to say about my principal. She is a very good woman and a very good principal. Thank you.

Emma Rabiner, Attends Cranston High School East – Res. #12-6-36

As a student who has experienced knowing first hand, as well as principals who just did not know what to do about it and couldn't help me; take it from me that Mrs. Valk is a great principal. When I was bullied horribly in New Jersey, the principal there did not do anything at all. However, here at Waterman, the second the bullying started up, Mrs. Valk put it to an end. Without her I would have been targeted and my elementary experience would have been awful. I credit her with the leadership that caused me to have a successful elementary school experience. Mrs. Valk is needed at Waterman School.

Elana Carello-Rabiner, 52 Mason Ave., Cranston – Res. #12-9-36

Parents and students are here once again asking of the School Committee to renew Principal Valk's contract. The following facts support our opinion that Waterman School is thriving under the leadership of Principal Valk. According to RICAN, the Rhode Island Campaign for Achievement Now, Waterman School is ranked #8 out

of 66 schools for 2011 performance gains on the elementary school level. According to the 2011-12 RI Education Survey, Survey Works, 90% of the teacher staff agree or strongly agree that they feel safe in the school; 80% of the teacher staff agree or strongly agree that the principal treats all teachers fairly; 89.2% of parents agree or strongly agree that the community supports this school; 84.3% of parents agree or strongly agree that it is easy for us to communicate with my child's principal if I need to; 88.3% of parents agree or strongly agree that this school responds quickly to our request or concerns; 84.8% of parents agree or strongly agree that this school views parents as important partners; 85.5% of parents agree or strongly agree that this school and I have the same goals for my child; 91.4% of parents agree or strongly agree that we feel welcome at this school. Given these facts, it appears to be unjustified to terminate the employment of Joanne Valk. I believe Waterman School should be allowed to keep the principal that helmed these successes. I ask you, "Why would the administration want to find a more qualified individual that would better meet the needs of the district when the individual already holds that position. Waterman School deserves continuity. Joanne Valk is a principal that knows our children, their struggles and their successes, their strengths and their weaknesses. Starting over with another principal seems to be a pointless and unnecessary hardship for all involved. I respectfully request that you vote against the Superintendent's recommendation not to renew Mrs. Valks' contract. Mrs. Valk impresses me every day with her professionalism, smarts, patience and concern for the children of Waterman School. I urge

you to do the right thing which you have done in the past and allow Waterman School to keep Principal Valk. Thank you.

Dannelle Littleton, 8 Bradford Rd., Cranston, Res. #12-6-36

I'm here tonight to speak in support for Joanne Valk, the principal of Waterman Elementary School. As a parent of a child in Special Education, I have frequently had the chance to interact with Mrs. Valk.

As you may know, as the principal she plays an important role in the IEP process, a process which can be confusing and contentious; yet vital to a child's future. The IEP Team changes from year to year as different teachers and service providers join or leave the team. Mrs. Valk has been the one team member from the school district that has not changed since our son received his IEP four years ago. She's the one team member that knows the history of my child's IEP and what strategies have helped to make him a successful student. I have found that this is extremely important when developing and implementing strategies to help my child succeed in school. Approximately 13% of the school district students have IEP's and a principal with knowledge and understanding in this area is a must. My son has had many successes in school and I feel that Mrs. Valk's knowledge of his particular strengths and weaknesses has been one of the reasons that he has been able to succeed. I believe that removing Mrs. Valk from our school will be detrimental to my son as well as other students enrolled at Waterman School. Thank you.

Christin Goff, 134 Harpar Ave., Cranston, Res. #12-6-36

I'm the parent of two Waterman School students; Hope who is six and going into first grade in September and James, who turned eight last month and will be going into the third grade. I'm here to advocate on behalf of Principal Valk who in the three years since I met her has done, in my opinion, quite a good job as lead administrator in this small school. The day I met Mrs. Valk, I was attempting to register my son for Kindergarten. We had just moved to Cranston and hardly knew anyone in the neighborhood. Time had gotten away from me and I had read in the paper that it was the last day to register. It was a hot day and I had driven to the Administration Building, registered James, but had forgotten one piece of important information. I then went home, made a copy of the document but when I returned a few hours later, I found a sign on the door that read, essentially, to get inside, please call and there was a number written. I didn't have a cell phone and I had two extremely hot children and my knocking produced no answer so I wrote the number down and drove home, called and got a machine. The message I left probably had a hint of frustration in the tone but I left it thinking I would have to wait until the actual start of school to register my son. However, I received a late afternoon phone call from a woman named Joanne Valk who offered to come get the document from me at my house and welcome us to the neighborhood at the same time, which she did. She met my children; she was friendly and business-like; she apologized for the cell phone sign explaining that doors needed to be locked at all time for protection. I ultimately understood and she left me feeling relieved and satisfied. This principal had gone above and beyond to

make me, a new resident of Cranston, feel welcomed. That first year went fairly smoothly. James liked kindergarten although his teacher, Jen O'Rourke mentioned increasing incidences of his not knowing where to put his folder; not wanting to sit still at assemblies; too long at the rest room and not being able to focus or concentrate in the am class. She recommended moving him to the pm class which she said had a less energetic, more focused group of students and James seemed to do better in this class. In first grade; however, on the first Thursday of school, James was given placement with the same teacher he had for Kdg. James got frustrated and started yelling that he hated school; didn't want to do any work; wanted to go home immediately and that he wanted to kill everyone. He was immediately suspended. Mrs. Valk had said that talk like that would not be tolerated and James was not to be in school the next day. At this time she was reminded about the 30 second time frame. I wrote many letters to this administration, including the Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent, School Committee members, special education experts, leaders and administrators and received very few responses. Some people ignored my letters; one wrote back and flat out refused to help. But Joanne Valk did not. He's doing much better; I owe much of his recent success to Mrs. Valk for continuing to ask for support for James; continuing to seek the program he needs and notice his strength and victories. My son is being helped in becoming a more socially integrated kid because of the efforts and understanding of Mrs. Valk and her continued openness to communicate and learn about the best practices for children like him.

He's a spectrum child. Ignorance and turned backs do nothing. Mrs. Valk never turned her back. I thank her for that. Thank you.

Joanne Maslen, 35 Beech Ave., Cranston, Res. #12-6-36

I'm here on behalf of Mrs. Valk. I'm a parent at Waterman School. I have one child left there and I've had horrible experiences with Waterman School and the Administration above Mrs. Valk. I'm here because my child needed help and wasn't getting it; not because of Mrs. Valk. Without Mrs. Valk in the building, I don't feel my son, who is entering first grade, may be safe in that school because Mrs. Valk was my daughter's security. She's always been there for my children even though I've been told by above administrators that they would never react for their children as I would on their behalf. My kids have had hurts and Mrs. Valk was there. She didn't put them down and she supported my kids and I feel that she supports the other children in the school. When you have teachers that go above their principal to administration, I think it's wrong. Teachers who have told students that they can chew gum may be a little thing but to me it's playing a parent against a parent. Just don't tell the principal, but you can chew gum. All little things like that knocks down the principal. I feel that Mrs. Valk is a good example for my children. She came out to my home. She was always there and she still is and she needs to stay where she is so that the kids will be safe in that school.

Consent Calendar / Consent Agenda

The proposed consent agenda this evening is Resolution No. 12-6-33

through 12-6-35, and

12-6-37. Moved by Mr. Lombardi, seconded by Mr. Traficante and unanimously carried to approve the consent agenda.

PERSONNEL

NO. 12-6-33 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, said certified personnel be recalled from layoff, and

Be it further RESOLVED, that the Superintendent notify these individuals of the committee's actions.

NO. 12-6-34 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, said certified administrator be appointed as follows:

Tonianne Napolitano, Principal

Garden City Elementary School

Contract Effective Date...July 1, 2012

See Attached Financial Impact Analysis

NO. 12-6-35 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following certified personnel be appointed as substitutes on a temporary basis as needed:

Alicia Imondi, Elementary & Special Education

Ashley Armenti, Elementary

NO. 12-6-37 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the retirement(s) of the following non-certified

personnel be accepted:

Rita Bedrosian, Secretary

Arlington School

Effective Date...June 29, 2012

Superintendent Nero

First of all I am pleased to announce that after 42 years of being a secretary in the district, Rita Bedrosian has been at Arlington, is going to be retiring. It's going to be a great loss for the Arlington School. Rita has always been an exceptional person so I want to wish Rita well in her retirement.

We also have an administrator entering and I'd like to recognize the fact and I appreciate you supporting my recommendation for a very special school which is Garden City. I know it's very special to the Chairwoman because she went to that school as so many in Cranston have. I'd like to thank you for supporting my appointment tonight of Tonianne Napolitano who's coming to us from North Providence as an Assistant Principal. She has 15 years of experience in Providence and she is about ready for her dissertation. Toni is here with her family tonight. I welcome her and congratulate her.

Dr. Lundsten

I would like to add my congratulations to the retirement of Rita Bedrosian. I have had the most wonderful introduction to being a principal. The people that you work with really help support you and

Rita was certainly there for me when I was the principal at Arlington. I would like to wish her the very best; I will miss her when I pick up the phone and I call over to Arlington. She's been there and knows the families and knows the staff. I wish her the very best and a healthy retirement.

RESOLUTIONS

SPONSORED BY THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Moved by Mr. Lombardi, and seconded by Mrs. I Ruggieri for discussion. Mr. Lombardi made the following comments on this resolution:

This time of the year brings us a lot of pride and joy as being School Committee members but nothing brings more pride and joy to me as when I watch all the celebrations and all the events involving our JROTC Students. Needless to say, they are always there; they are at all of the events; and they bring a solemn and dignified perception of every event they attend. I commented at every graduation; every honors night; every event, that I never get sick of watching that. It's just something to watch; something beautiful and something that makes us very, very proud. Tonight we recognize seven very special Cranston East JROTC students/cadets. At this time, Mr. Lombardi read the resolution to the audience:

NO. 12-6-32 - WHEREAS, under the instruction/supervision of the Cranston High School East Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps

(JROTC) Leadership Program, seven (7) Cranston High School East Student/Cadets were selected to attend this years Rhode Island Boys and Girls State Program to be held at Roger Williams University from June 17 – 22, 2012, and

WHEREAS, the American Legion Boys State and the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State Programs are two of the premier civics educational programs in the Nation for high school students, and

WHEREAS, this week long resident program works to instill within aspiring young leaders a practical understanding of governmental processes and a well-founded appreciation for our democratic republic, and

WHEREAS, this selection is highly competitive; extremely capable high school juniors from across Rhode Island compete for a very limited number of slots and to have seven highly motivated young men and women attending from Cranston is a momentous accomplishment for Cranston High School East, Cranston Public Schools and the City of Cranston, and

WHEREAS, the following Cranston East Students/Cadets who have earned selection to attend Little Rhody Boys & Girls State 2012:

Melvin Morales Michelle Nunez Romeo Sarum

Matthew Imbruglia Helen Le Markirys Aracena

Scott Marcinko

Be it RESOLVED, that these seven Student/Cadets from Cranston High School East be congratulated and commended for achieving this goal.

Be it further RESOLVED, that these seven students and the Cranston High School East JROTC program be presented with a copy of this Resolution signed by the members of the School Committee.

Mr. Traficante

When I attended URI many years ago back in the 1950's the military draft was still in existence. I'm sorry to say when the draft was done away with; I was rather disappointed because I think that every student in this country should serve this country in some capacity. When I went to URI, I joined the ROTC program thinking that if I'm going to get drafted why I don't get drafted as an officer. Each and every time I've been in the presence of the JROTC Program at East, I've been extremely impressed and very proud. I'm very proud of your presentation; I'm very proud of your appearance; I'm very proud of your excellence in character and most important, I am very proud of your patriotism. I'm proud to be associated with you and I'm proud to be identified with you. Thank you for your service.

The roll was called:

Mr. Bloom Yes Mr. Traficante Yes

Mrs. Culhane Yes Mrs. Ruggieri Yes
Mr. Lombardi Yes Mrs. McFarland Yes
Ms. Iannazzi Yes

At this time, Chairperson Iannazzi asked the students to come forward to accept their certificates and their awards.

NO. 12-6-36 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the non-renewal of Administrator A – Elementary Principal, be accepted.

A motion was made by Mr. Lombardi on 12-6-36 to Table this Resolution. This motion was seconded by Mr. Traficante. The roll was called:

Mr. Lombardi Yes Mrs. McFarland Recuse
Mr. Traficante Yes Mr. Bloom Yes
Mrs. Ruggieri Yes Mrs. Culhane Yes
Ms. Iannazzi Yes

This resolution remains on the table until the next School Committee Meeting.

Public Hearing on Non-agenda Items – There were none.

Announcement of Future Meetings – July 11 & July 16, 2012'

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Traficante, seconded by Mrs.

Culhane and unanimously carried to adjourn this meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank S. Lombardi
School Committee Clerk

Administrator's Compensation Schedule

Fiscal Year 2012-2013

NAME	POSITION	SCHOOL	ANN	SALARY
HEALTH	DENTAL	LIFE PENSION	SURV	
BEN	OASDI	MEDICARE	TOTAL Fringe	Sal & Fringe

Napolitano, Tonianne	Principal	Gard. City	88,000.00	16810	1105	33
12,390	96	0	1276	31,710	119,710	